# ADDRESS

TO THE

# CHIRURGO-OBSTETRICAL SOCIETY.

# AN

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# CHIRURGO-OBSTETRICAL SOCIETY:

DELIVERED AT THEIR FIRST MEETING.

BY

JOHN AITKEN, M. D.

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS, &c.

HONORARY PRESI[illegible]

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The following Pages are respectfully Inscribed

TO THE

PRESIDENTS

AND

OTHER MEMBERS

OF THE

CHIRURGO-OBSTETRICAL SOCIETY,

OF

EDINBURGH.

# AN ADDRESS, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

I MUST be allowed to plead my numerous avocations, with which many of you are not unacquainted, as an apology for the following addreſs.

ASSOCIATION exalts the human powers, and exhibits them in a ſplendour almoſt god-like, which otherwiſe they could never attain.

This propoſition might be illuſtrated by many facts, drawn from the hiſtory of man in his rude as well as his civilized ſtate.

In the former the human ſavage is ſurpaſſed in ſtrength, and nearly equalled in ſtratagem, by many of the ferocious tenants of the deſert: almoſt devoid of reflection, he is well nigh a mere ſenſitive Being, and as far removed from Science as from Society.

But when Aſſociation has taken place, the latent ſeeds of the underſtanding begin to be evolved, and to ſhoot up into goodly plants, loaded with the precious fruits of ſcience, and order, and empire, and all the envied ſweets of life.

How unimportant was ROMULUS till aided by Aſſociation! Under its influence ROME, the miſtreſs and wonder of the world, reared her imperial head.

In no department has the power of Aſſociation been more beautifully and beneficially diſplayed than in Science; which, like a rich field, in proportion to its culture, teems with the faireſt fruits.

Experience of the ſalutary effects of Aſſociation in ſcience, has laid the foundation of numerous

merous Philoſophical Societies in various countries, which ſtand forth their greateſt pride and ornament.

The productions of theſe ſocieties, like the ambroſia of the hive, are the valuable evidence of the unwearied induſtry and reſearch of their numerous Members.

MEDICAL Societies have had the happieſt effects.

Convinced of this fact KINGS and PRINCES have chearfully conferred on them eſtabliſhment, patronage, and honorary diſtinctions.

Thoſe Medical Societies which are calculated to diffuſe knowledge among the Members, by extemporary argumentation and debate on ſelect ſubjects, are perhaps not the leaſt valuable.

Every Member produces his ſtock of information; the collection increaſes, and with it keep pace the mental ardor and acuteneſs of the diſputants.

A ſtronger

A ſtronger proof of my aſſertion I cannot produce than the meritorious eſtabliſhment of ſeveral Medical Societies in this city, ſome of which had to encounter the moſt unexpected and illiberal oppoſition.

I had the honour to preſide in the Royal Medical Society, when a reſolution was made to build a Hall.

The unremitting attention with which I promoted that important buſineſs, which I believe is known to very few of its preſent ordinary Members, gives me high ſatisfaction.

I had alſo the honour to addreſs that Society, convened in their Hall for the firſt time to purſue the laudable objects of their inſtitution.

I then foreſaw and foretold the permanence and honour it has now attained.

The preſent great occaſion has placed me in a nearly ſimilar ſituation, and I truſt warrants a ſimilar prediction.

The CHIRURGO-OBSTETRICAL SOCIETY, ſo fortunately founded, cannot fail to reflect the higheſt honour on the original Members, provided they call forth into full exertion thoſe powers and that knowledge which I know they poſſeſs.

After moſt gratefully mentioning the diſtinguiſhed rank of Honorary Preſident, conferred upon me by your partiality and unanimous ſuffrage, in conſequence of which I now have the honour to addreſs you; may I take the liberty ſhortly to point out a few circumſtances that I deem eſſential to our proſperity and permanence?

I. Our laws ought to poſſeſs a wholeſome ſimplicity, and be enforced with impartiality, as well with regard to the ſpirit as letter of them.

II. The ſubjects for diſcuſſion, whether under the name of *caſes* or *queſtions*, ought to be ſuch as are important and of a practical nature.

III. The

III. The Members ought to come duly prepared with every ſort of information, ſo that our deliberations may be mutually inſtructive, and at ſame time uſeful to ſociety at large.

IV. Our diſputations muſt be conducted with candour, liberality, and moderation, ſuited to the greatneſs of the buſineſs, and to our own characters as philoſophers and gentlemen.

V. Our election of Members ought to be free and impartial. Faction and cabal are baneful in the laſt degree, and frequently have ſubverted thrones and empires. Let us avoid them, and be ever ready to give a welcome reception to Merit from every quarter.

*Tros Tyriuſve nobis nullum diſcrimen habebit.*

A large experience entitles me to affirm that this conduct will highly contribute to give us due dignity without doors, and conſequently tend to encreaſe our numbers by valuable aſſociates.

IV. That

VI. We will do well to imitate, as much as our circumſtances permit, ſome ſplendid model in the ſame glorious courſe.

Without depreciating any Society in our own country, of which many are moſt reſpectable and meritorious, I ſhall venture to propoſe the ROYAL ACADEMY OF SURGERY at Paris, for our imitation.

This requires our making ourſelves acquainted with their valuable memoirs, which I conſider as a grand magazine of ſterling knowledge.

VII. We ought immediately to form a MUSEUM of *Books*, *Manuſcripts*, *Inſtruments*, &c. which, like many other ſmall beginnings, I hope may ſoon acquire an uſeful and important magnitude; ſo that our Members may have at leaſt one very great privilege.

VIII. We ought diligently to proceed with the collection of our own diſſertations and remarks; to effect this, I propoſe that a *Recording Committee* be elected, whoſe duty it ſhall

be

be to keep an accurate ſtatement of the principal views and arguments that may be ſuggeſted in debate, particularly on our queſtions.

IX. That our information may be abundant, I imagine that it would be highly uſeful to create an order of Members, under the title of *Correſpondents*, to conſiſt of the moſt eminent Practitioners in Surgery and Midwifery in this and other kingdoms, in order to obtain communications of remarkable facts, &c. to be laid before the Society at every meeting, under the title of *Medical News*, and to be duly recorded.

Who does not foreſee that in this way many valuable materials for a PUBLICATION muſt ſoon be in our poſſeſſion, which may be an honour to our Society, an advantage to our profeſſion and to mankind.

Is it neceſſary to remark, that theſe are not utopian projects, never to be reallized? on the contrary, the objects of them are placed within our reach, and invite the hand of genius

nius and induſtry to pluck laurels of the moſt honourable deſcription.

After this ſpecification of profits to the Members, it may be proper to add, that a well-merited DIPLOMA from the Chirurgo-Obſtetrical Society is likely to be no ſmall recommendation in the hand of a young practitioner.

I ſhall have the honour, annually, to preſent to the Society *a Gold Medal*, with a ſuitable *device* and *inſcription*, to be diſpoſed of by a majority of ſuffrages to the Member who ſhall appear to have acquitted himſelf beſt in writing and argument; the firſt one ſhall be given in the end of Spring, 1787.

At all times it ſhall be my ambition to contribute my mite to obtain the great objects of our inſtitution, and I deſpair not, in conſequence of your exemplary and meritorious procedure, at no very diſtant period, to congratulate you as a legal Incorporation in your own Hall.---*Valete.*